

Policy Position Paper

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Should the government guarantee housing for people who are homeless?

According to the latest Department of Homeless Service Data Report Fiscal YEAR 2023 QTR 2, about an average of 18,326 individuals who are classified as single adults are in the shelter system. This data is exclusively for New York. It has received a 21% increase since November 2021-2022. How can we explain the increase on homeless? The access to resources for certain individuals can make them more prone to end up in the shelter system or living in the street. The rising cost of economy and expensive housing crash. If you are from New York you will know how hard it is to find stable housing for those who have a stable job that pays well and they have no kids. Now imagine a family of 5 or a single man who lost his job and has a hard trouble finding one that couldn't make ends meet. Families coming to the United States in seek for a better future and end up in the homeless shelter. A lot of things can make you go inside the shelter system but they all seem to be tied to poverty. So, what exactly is poverty? Poverty is the state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amount. The exceptionally high prevalence of family homelessness in New York is a result of the city's tight housing market; the cost and accessibility of apartments there are comparable to other major cities in the United States. According to an article published by the New York Times called a snapshot of Homelessness Policies around the U.S and the World, In California Tens of billions of dollars have been spent by the state to combat homelessness, but efforts have been hindered by both areas that oppose the building of shelters and supportive housing. For each and every homeless family in New York, there would be 4.91 unoccupied apartments with rentals below the 10th percentile, compared to 5.04 such available units elsewhere, if the rate of homelessness there were the same as in the other cities. If you Live in New York City and use public transportation to commute

you don't really look at data to be realistically speaking. You see on average more than 2-3 people on the train and on the street, who are homeless and wonder why are they still here temperatures freezing, lack of appropriate clothing and begging for food or money on the street and you start to think okay what is the city doing about this? I ask myself this all the time whenever I see a homeless person on the street other times I want to give them money or food. Sometimes they don't even want the food they just want money and that's when my brain starts to process that maybe they just want to continue to beg because they will use the money for something else or they don't want to sign up to shelters because their scared of conflicts and fights. I personally feel no matter how many policies are put into place to protect the vulnerable population of the Homeless some individuals have become immune to live in hazardous conditions and if they are taken out of that habit then they won't be able to function in society. In New York, homeless shelters are voluntary which makes it contradicting to believe because the resources are out there.

I agree that the government should guarantee housing for people who are homeless but create certain criteria for them. Which include free access to mental health care despite if they get a job because insurance is also a big issue in obtaining these benefits. I believe the government should be able to create safe shelters with more workers who aren't burnt out because if the workers are frustrated the lack of care diminishes and turnover rates are increasing in the mental health field. The government should make it mandatory to remove homeless people to the shelter system and link them to resources of mental health to evaluate for any potential medical illnesses. But I also believe not every homeless person has a mental health diagnosis. It is possible they can have depression, anxiety, etc. but it is the professional duty to make sure the diagnosis is correct because then it becomes a disservice to the individuals and breaks ethical conduct. Guarantee

housing for homeless can get them the direct care they need with all services under one roof. What I mean is the government can create shelters and can include a doctor, dentist on premises. Each shelter has a social worker but why not include more to make sure all clients are being serviced and the worker is not burnt out with services. For privacy reasons I will not disclose name of shelter in my paperwork,

I am a Mental Health Worker/Case Planner for a preventive agency in Queens and we recently got a few asylum-seeking cases. As I make visits to the shelter I noticed one specific one where workers are not as supportive as they should be. Now what I think is why are you in a social worker profession if you are not advocating for others. I usually am the worker who likes to have meetings with other providers to discuss what are they doing. Everyone must be on the same page. The client in the shelter needed milk for her infant and the hospital gave her some and the preventive agency as well. The shelter knowing the mother and child did not have access to food stamps or any other governmental assistance has not helped the mother with the milk situation for her infant. I thought a shelter was to be able to provide resources for the client especially if city has funding for this. I do agree and take my stance on government guarantee housing especially with the housing crisis that has happened throughout the recent events where people are migrating to New York seeking asylum. I do believe in code of ethics and doing the right thing and advocating for people. However, I feel it should be certain guidelines the government must create because there needs to be a balance and right now there is a lack of resources in shelter system for NYC families because now we have to service asylum seekers as well. There is a saying that states how can we help others if we can't help ourselves and, in that decision, making even though we are a sanctuary state we took more than what we can chew and consequences can happen. I looked further into statistics because not everything in the media is

100 percent factual. According to article published by coalition for the homeless, The New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system housed 102,656 diverse homeless adults and children. The number of homeless New Yorkers staying in city shelters each night is currently 39% more than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single individuals has risen 112 percent in the last decade.

According to DHS research, the biggest cause of homelessness, especially among families, is a shortage of housing affordability. Eviction; doubled-up or extremely overcrowded housing; domestic abuse; job loss; and dangerous poor housing have all been recognized as key urgent, precipitating factors of homelessness in surveys of homeless families. In recent years, there has been a demand to get affordable housing and various housing lotteries where individuals can obtain apartments even in luxury spaces in certain neighborhoods throughout NYC. NYC has a tight housing market and often time's families shared apartments to split the cost of the expensive rent. New York's housing and homeless regulations may be a key contributor to the city's unique homelessness problem. In a variety of ways, these policies favor the homeless over the housed poor, and they are much more accommodating to the homeless than those in other cities. Because more impoverished families may better their situation while becoming homeless in New York than in other cities, it is not unexpected that the city has a greater percentage of homelessness among families. (Randall K. Filer).

In conclusion, Government should guarantee housing for homeless individuals because the city has an obligation to shelter individuals and their families that claim to be homeless and request shelter assistance. This rule is the outcome of a series of court judgments and enforcement actions, concluding in the 1986 case of *McLain v. Koch*. The city meets its commitment to provide refuge by housing families in various quality motels, public shelters, or finding them

permanent residence in public housing through section 8, NYCHA, or City FEPSs voucher to name a few.

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